

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE NORTHERN COLORADO HEADWATERS WILDERNESS ACT OF 1998

HON. DAVID E. SKAGGS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today The Northern Colorado Headwaters Wilderness Act of 1998.

This bill is inspired by the dramatic mountain beauty of Colorado. Its provisions have been tempered and refined by a process of review and comments by hundreds of Colorado citizens and local officials, and crafted to fit into the tapestry of Colorado wilderness legislation.

In Colorado we are experiencing one of the highest growth rates in the country. That growth brings with it ever greater demand for outdoor recreation, as well as more stress on our supplies of water and other resources. As we face that growth and those pressures, it is especially timely and important that we deliberately and carefully set aside some special places to remain forever wild.

As a very thoughtful and pragmatic county commissioner from my district describes it, we now are putting, and will continue to put, demands on our natural-resources checking account. As we try to accommodate those demands, it is important that we make some deposits in the savings account of our wildland heritage. That's what this bill would do.

The areas this bill would protect include sweeping alpine tundra along the great Continental Divide; rich, deep old growth forests of fir, spruce, pine, and aspen; and crisp, sparkling mountain streams that flow from the edge of perennial snowfields and from deep mountain lakes.

They are places where you can witness the primeval naturalness of the world and watch weather moving through one hundred miles of sky.

Their designation as wilderness will permanently protect them as habitat for elk, big horn sheep, mountain goats, native greenback cutthroat trout, bear, bobcat, and eagles.

As wilderness, these remarkable places will remain as refuges for our own sanity and inspiration, either because we visit them, or just because we take comfort in knowing that such places are there, and remain unspoiled.

Among the wilderness lands included in this legislation is the James Peak area, certainly the key single area in the proposal, comprising about half the bill's total wilderness acreage. James Peak is a broad expanse of alpine terrain, about two-thirds above timberline. Roadless and virtually untouched by the century and a half of human activity and settlements around its flanks, James Peak offers unique backcountry recreational opportunities and the reassurance that a part of our natural heritage, near the homes of two million people, endures as it has since the last ice age.

Although this bill includes only half the James Peak roadless area suitable for wilder-

ness designation—that portion east of the divide in the Congressional District that I am proud to represent—it is important to protect that portion now. Its designation will reflect the will of a majority of people who have contacted me about James Peak and the resolutions of support received from three counties and many communities near the area.

Discussions will continue on the ultimate level of protection for the portion of James Peak to the west, outside the scope of this bill. I hope these discussions will conclude in a compromise agreement on boundaries and designations that will keep a significant portion in wild condition, free from motors and permanent habitations.

The other areas included in this bill are additions to existing wilderness areas, at Comanche Peak, Indian Peaks, and Mount Evans. Their addition will not only expand the terrain protected as wilderness, but also enhance the values and features that led to the original designations.

It's important to note that this bill, at 30,030 acres, includes only one tenth of the roadless areas in the Arapahoe and Roosevelt National Forests that were recently studied by the U.S. Forest Service. And while the bill would designate as wilderness more than the Forest Service recommended, it still is a very small part of the lands that qualify. We should protect this much, on which we have much agreement, now, while we can, leaving discussions about additional areas to another day.

I realize that this bill is introduced very late in this Congress, at a time when many other issues are seeking attention and time on the legislative calendar. Its timing, however, reflects the extensive discussions that I have had with so many knowledgeable and concerned citizens and officials at home.

Because of that time invested, this is a bill that reflects the broadest consensus of those who know and care about the issues. As such, it deserves prompt approval in the weeks remaining before adjournment.

AMERICAN GI FORUM—"EDUCATION IS OUR FREEDOM AND FREEDOM SHOULD BE EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS"

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend a proud salute to the members of the American GI Forum who have gathered to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of this organization by the late D. Hector P. Garcia.

Dr. Garcia was an inspiration to all of us and his legacy continues through the work the members do in his name and in the name of the organization he founded. The American GI Forum, a family-oriented Hispanic veterans group, was conceived in Corpus Christi, Texas

in the spring of 1948 after veterans raised concerns about their benefits and treatment. Dr. Garcia began fighting for the civil rights of many Americans—long before others joined the cause. He fought for civil, human and individual rights. His ideas were firmly planted in south Texas and in the Hispanic community—nationwide. His efforts produced many of today's Hispanic leaders and provided the foundation for tomorrow's generation of leaders.

Today, this organization has more than 100,000 members and 500 chapters in 32 states and Puerto Rico. More than 1,000,000 Hispanic veterans have proudly served their country and earned recognition for their service.

The GI Forum continues to champion issues which impact the community including: access to health care for veterans, affirmative action, a fair and accurate census count, juvenile crime prevention, adolescent pregnancy prevention, and improving conditions in colonias.

Dr. Garcia's legacy continues to be felt today as the organization looks into the future. He believed that education was the foundation for future generations. To this end, the American GI Forum is making a concentrated effort to educate and provide leadership development opportunities for young people.

The American GI Forum celebrates 50 glorious years and many accomplishments, but the best years are yet to come. The future years will result in the fulfillment of Dr. Garcia's dream for a better tomorrow for all Americans.

THE SIGNING OF THE CREDIT UNION MEMBERSHIP ACCESS ACT

HON. GEORGE E. BROWN, JR.

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. BROWN of California. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton is scheduled to sign H.R. 1151, the Credit Union Membership Access Act, into law tomorrow, August 7, 1998, at 10:15 a.m., in a private ceremony in the White House Oval Office. As an original cosponsor of H.R. 1151, I rise today to praise Congress, the Clinton Administration and the credit union community for working together in a bipartisan matter to enact this important legislation.

With the enactment of H.R. 1151, the 1934 Federal Credit Union Act will be amended to preserve the ability of all Americans to join the credit union of their choice, and to ensure that the 73 million Americans who are currently members of credit unions in no way have their membership status jeopardized. Today, we celebrate a true victory for working, middle class Americans who need affordable financial services. Credit unions represent democracy in the work force. This bill improves consumer choice and allows for greater competition in the financial services sector. Now, working people and consumers will continue to have access to the affordable financial services that credit unions have always offered.

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